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The
STRANGERS AT HOME;

A
Comic Opera,
In Three Acts.

As performed at the

Theatre Royal in Drury Lane.

The Second Edition



L O N D O N :

Printed for Harrison, & C^o. 18, Paternoster Row.

MDCCCLXXXVI.





TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

IT being peculiarly the business of a dramatic writer, to select those popular topics upon which he is assured of having the public voice with him, it might naturally be expected that, after receiving Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's gracious permission to lay this Dramatic Essay at Your feet, I should eagerly have availed myself of the opportunity thus given me, of expatiating on those manners, talents, and virtues, which constitute so general a theme of admiration. But minds truly
conscious

DEDICATION.

conscious of meriting praise are ever reserved and delicate in accepting it: and perhaps Your ROYAL HIGHNESS will not suffer a sincere acknowledgment of merit, because the panegyric of Princes has been too often stained with adulation.

Restrained by this consideration, I must content myself with offering my humble acknowledgments for the honour conferred on me, in the countenance of my feeble endeavours to cultivate an elegant art which so eminently boasts the protection of Your ROYAL HIGHNESS.

I am, with the most profound respect,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obedient,

And most devoted servant,

LONDON,
FEB. 22, 1786.

JAMES COBB.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the STRANGERS AT HOME would think himself guilty of great injustice, if at a moment when the Piece is so highly honoured by the public approbation, he should forget how much of that approbation he owes to the abilities of the Performers, all of whom so kindly interested themselves in its success. To Mr. KING he has peculiar obligations, for the care and attention with which he superintended the rehearsals of the Opera; and to that Gentleman's judicious criticisms he is likewise highly indebted. Although it might be superfluous for the Author to add his praises to those which the public have so liberally and deservedly bestowed on Mr. LINLEY's Music, he cannot but congratulate himself on having had the assistance of so able a Master,

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Aldobrand	- -	Mr. KING.
Regnalto	- -	Mr. WILLIAMES.
Octavio	- -	Mr. DIGNUM.
Montano	- -	Mr. BARRYMORE.
Fabio	- -	Mr. PHILLIMORE.
Firelock	- -	Mr. BANNISTER.
Laurence	- -	Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.
Roberto	- -	Mr. JONES.
Viola	- -	Mrs. CROUCH.
Laura	- -	Mrs. FORSTER.
Alice	- -	Mrs. WRIGHTEN.
Rosa	- -	Mrs. JORDAN.

SCENE, FLORENCE.

☞ The Passages marked with inverted Commas are omitted in the Representation.

THE
Strangers at Home.

A
COMIC OPERA.

ACT I.

SCENE, a Street in FLORENCE.

VIOLA and ALICE in a Balcony belonging to REGNALTO's House.

*A Procession of Captives redeemed from Slavery crosses the Stage;
among them are REGNALTO and LAURENCE.*

CHORUS.

WELCOME once more our native land!
Where smiling Freedom's bounteous hand
Life's fading picture bids to glow
With tints she can alone bestow!
'Tis Liberty inspires the lay,
To hail our second natal day:
Hail, Goddess bright! by all ador'd;
By thee to more than life restor'd.

ALICE.

What a glorious procession, Ma'am!

VIOLA.

Glorious indeed, Alice! to see so many of our countrymen
redeemed from foreign slavery, and all by the munificence of
the young and noble Octavio!

ALICE.

Ah, Madam! I fancy this same Signor Octavio has enslaved
you at the very moment when he was giving others their liberty.

B

VIOLA.

VIOLA.

Oh, that my long lost brother were but among these ransom'd captives!

ALICE.

And oh! that my long lost husband were among them too! Lord, Ma'am! talk of a brother—I'm sure, when I was of your age, I should have thought one husband worth twenty brothers.

VIOLA.

Hark!—I hear the music again!—Let us listen.

Some of the Crowd come forward with Flasks of Wine; they appear to congratulate the Captives, who drink with them, and join in the following Catch.

C A T C H.

Come, come, drink away, boys! let our glasses keep time
To the tune of the bells that so merrily chime!

Ding, dong; ding, dong, bell—that so merrily chime!
From slavery freed, we'll forget all our pains;
At the tyrant we'll laugh while he rattles his chains!

We'll laugh at his chains!

Thus music and drinking all sorrow shall drown:

Then, my boys! let us take off our glasses;
Huzza! huzza! ev'ry bumper shall crown.

ALDOBRAND, (*Without.*)

Viola!

ALICE.

There is that croaking old raven, your guardian.

ALDOBRAND.

Viola, my dear! where are you?

ALICE.

Don't answer him, Ma'am.

VIOLA.

Look, Alice! there are two men whose eyes seem rivetted upon us.

ALICE.

ALICE.

Where?—Eh!—Why, sure—Yes—No—Yes, it is my poor husband! It is Laurence!

ALDOBRAND, (*Without.*)

Alice! why, Alice!

ALICE.

Coming, Sir, presently.

REGNALTO and LAURENCE *come forward.*

LAURENCE.

Yes, there is Alice, sure enough! My rib, my spouse! and as plump as ever. She has not pined much after me, I see.

REGNALTO.

It is my sister! my Viola.

ALDOBRAND, (*Without.*)

Viola!—Alice!—where are you?

ALICE.

Coming, Sir!—Plague take the old curmudgeon! You must go to him, Ma'am.

REGNALTO.

She looks on me, but does not know me.

[*Exeunt VIOLA and ALICE from the Balcony.*]

And see! they vanish like spirits at the dawn of day.

LAURENCE.

Spirits! I am sure, then, they are choice spirits. Heaven blest you, Sir, they are flesh and blood, I'll warrant; at least, I can answer for Alice.—But I think I scent the supper! Oh, for a fat capon, and a bottle of good wine!—I'll knock at the door.

REGNALTO.

By no means: you know my suspicions of Aldobrand, with whom I left the charge of my sister, and my house. I am resolved to remain concealed till I can satisfy those suspicions.

LAURENCE.

But may'nt I satisfy my hunger, in the mean while, Sir?

REGNALTO.

Have a little patience.

B 2

LAURENCE.

LAURENCE.

Ah, Sir! patience is a bad physician; he has worn me to a skeleton already. If I don't change my doctor, he'll soon make a dreadful change in me! But here comes the Algerine captain who brought us over.

Enter MONTANO.

REGNALTO.

Noble Ibrahim! I thank Heaven that I am at length arrived where I may be enabled properly to acknowledge that benevolence whose rays illumined our night of slavery. Nay, start not! are you surprized to find gratitude among the Christian virtues?

MONTANO.

No, my generous friend; wide as the sun darts his beams, he finds that precious jewel, which decks alike the Turban and the Cross!

REGNALTO.

Then let me express the grateful sentiments I feel——

MONTANO.

It will be sufficient that you suffer me to remain unknown and unnoticed in this city. *[Exit* MONTANO.

REGNALTO.

We must hasten to offer our respects to the generous Octavio.

LAURENCE.

I had much rather offer my respects to a well-covered table: we shall be in better spirits after supper; my gratitude will grow stronger as my stomach gets fuller.

REGNALTO.

Away! no trifling. We must pay our compliments where they are due, *[Exit,*

LAURENCE.

Well, Sir, if it must be so, I'll follow you presently: though mine, I fear, will be but empty compliments.—Ha! here comes
our

our fellow-captive, Firelock, the English soldier; that merry old fellow, whose jests and songs made us so often forget our sorrows.

Enter FIRELOCK.

Once more welcome to European ground, my old son of fun and frolic!

FIRELOCK.

Aye, my boy! and a son who has never dishonour'd his family. 'Tis 'only your common dull metal that rusts with the breath of care and misfortune: the high polish of mirth and good-humour always cast off the envenomed damp.

LAURENCE.

And did you really never meet with any misfortune which obliged you to complain?

FIRELOCK.

Faith, I never remember lamenting but two misfortunes in my whole life: one, that I was not at the Prussian review; and the other, that I had not the honour of being among the brave fellows besieged in Gibraltar.—But that's all over now! However, I hope I shall yet live to fight for my country,

LAURENCE.

I am going to return thanks to Signor Octavio.

FIRELOCK.

So shall I, as soon as I am drest.

LAURENCE.

Drest!

FIRELOCK.

Aye, I hardly dare call myself an Englishman while I wear the badges of slavery. Our noble captain, Ibrahim, has kindly presented me with the very cloaths in which I was taken by the Algerines: so, within an hour, you shall see me in that character which commands respect in every part of the world—a British soldier!—and then I shall want nothing but a mistress to make me compleatly happy.

LAURENCE.

They, you know, are to be purchased every where.

FIRELOCK.

FIRELOCK.

Aye, but I would as soon think of buying a friend as a mistress. Always barter love for love, and friendship for friendship: for, egad! when either of the commodities are put up to sale, depend upon it they are not worth buying. However, I don't despair of making myself pretty well understood by some kind Florentine girl or other. Love, I take it, is an universal language; much the same in most countries.

LAURENCE.

But, you will remember, it is a language in which the oldest scholars are not generally the greatest proficient!

FIRELOCK.

I understand you, young man! But I fear nothing. I am a mixture of spring and autumn: old Time and I have had so long a battle, that he has given up the point at last, and left me master of the field. Besides, if even a mistress should be coy, I have yet my bottle to comfort me.

A I R.

" In vain whining lovers their Cupid shall prize,
 " And boast that his godship's deriv'd from the skies;
 " Tho' divine was the birth of the young god of Love,
 " Our Bacchus, we know, was the son of great Jove:
 " Let us number Love's vot'ries, I think we can prove,
 " That tho' all the world drink, 'tis not all the world love."

When malicious young Cupid o'erwhelms us with grief,
 In the comforts of Bacchus we find sure relief:
 Tho' Chloe, disdainful, deny you her charms,
 When glowing with rapture you rush to her arms;
 Pay your court to a bumper, and there you will find
 A gay smiling mistress eternally kind.

Nay, when chilling age, like bleak winter, comes on,
 And the sunshine of beauty and love shall be gone;
 Still constant your bumper will smile to the end,
 And supply both the places of mistress and friend.
 Let us number Love's vot'ries, I think we can prove,
 That tho' all the world drink, 'tis not all the world love.

SCENE,

SCENE, a Room in REGNALTO'S House.

Enter ALDOBRAND and VIOLA.

ALDOBRAND.

There are all the people in Florence out at their windows, gaping at this scurvy procession of slaves. Tinkle but an old brass shovel in the streets of this city, and the inhabitants will swarm like bees at the sound! One would think there was a triumph for some victory, to-day.

VIOLA.

And what can be a nobler triumph, than the triumph of humanity! what a nobler victory, than that of freedom over slavery!

ALDOBRAND.

Psha! don't tell me! Self-preservation is the first tie of nature.

VIOLA.

But is it the only tie, Sir?

ALDOBRAND.

Charity should begin at home.

VIOLA.

And should charity end at home, too?

ALDOBRAND.

Certainly! you would not have me turn Charity out of doors? She keeps house with sober decent people, and only goes astray with such spendthrifts as Octavio.—By the bye, Viola, Octavio has invited us to his house to-day.

VIOLA.

To his house, Sir! [*Aside*—How my heart beats!] And do you mean that we should accept of his invitation?

ALDOBRAND.

Why, yes! for once in a way.—We are to meet Signor Lucilio and his wife Laura there. [*Aside*—Laura is a charming creature!]

VIOLA.

I am astonished, Sir!

ALDOBRAND.

THE STRANGERS AT HOME.

ALDOBRAND.

Don't be alarmed! I'll take care to watch Octavio: for I suppose he'll tease you with a parcel of stuff, that he is dying for love of you, and——

VIOLA.

Do you really think he will?

ALDOBRAND.

Oh, yes! these rakish young dogs begin to make love the moment they see a woman, just as naturally as you would say 'Pretty Pol!' to a parrot: but you must not answer him.

VIOLA.

Perhaps, then, he'll think that my silence gives consent.

ALDOBRAND.

Frown at him, as you do at me when I make love to you, and I'll be hang'd if he mistakes your silence for consent then!
[Exit.]

VIOLA.

Well, Signor Aldobrand, since you teach me the lesson of dissimulation, you must e'en take the consequences.

A I R.

Since you teach me, dear Sir, the art of deceiving,
You surely can ne'er take it ill,
If, while with attention your lessons receiving,
On yourself I should practise my skill.

And when of your own wit the dupe I have made you,
All doubts of your art 'twill remove;
For you can't but esteem it a compliment paid you,
To shew you how much I improve.

So doating parents oft have smil'd
At mischief from a fav'rite child;
And view'd, with fond, exulting joy,
The growing genius of the boy;
Who gives poor Hodge's awkward bow,
And shews you how he goes to plough;
Hits off the Vicar's vacant stare,
Wry faces makes behind his chair;
" Then sily mocks the Parson's quaffing,
" While they almost expire with laughing.

" Soon

" Soon panting for satiric fame,
 " Our little master seeks new game;
 " And, tir'd of laughing at the guest,
 " On host and hostess breaks his jest:
 " The father's gouty steps takes off,
 " His purblind eyes, and winter's cough;
 " Nor can Mamma's pert, smiling leer,
 " Escape the wicked urchin's sneer;
 " While giggling servants raptur'd sit,
 " To see how well the little wit"
 Now apes the simpers of Mamma,
 Then coughs and hobbles like Papa.

Re-enter ALDOBRAND with FABIO.

ALDOBRAND.

Fabio! this prodigal fool, Octavio, has ransom'd another parcel of slaves from Algiers.

FABIO.

Yes; the procession has disturb'd the whole city.

ALDOBRAND.

And this is called generosity! For my part, Fabio, I think such doings should not be tolerated. When Fate has thought fit to send a man into slavery, I think it is flying in the face of Fate to release him from his situation.

FABIO.

Your reasoning is very just, Sir.

ALDOBRAND.

Fabio! I never hear of a released captive, but I think of Regnalto. If by any ill luck he should find his way back to Florence——

FABIO.

Impossible, Sir! You know, I have assured you——

ALDOBRAND.

Why, yes, you *have* assured me: but you must know, friend Fabio I don't think that telling truth is your forte!—However, run and view this new cargo of slaves. Bring me but a true account of Regnalto's not being among them, and I'll compound with you for a month's lying afterwards. [*Exit FABIO.*]

C

Enter

Enter ALICE.

Well, Alice, any news of the worthy Regnalto?

ALICE.

Alas! no, Sir.

ALDOBRAND.

Ah!—Nor of your husband?

ALICE.

No, Sir. I have heard nothing of poor Laurence. [*Aside*—The old wretch shan't discover that I have *seen* him.]

ALDOBRAND.

My poor friend! I must give a tear to humanity.

ALICE.

Certainly, Sir. [*Aside*.—It costs you nothing, or else you would not give that.]

ALDOBRAND.

Now to our own concerns!—Do you know, Alice, I have resolved to take Viola with me to visit Octavio?

ALICE.

To visit Laura, you mean! I find she is to be of the party.

ALDOBRAND.

Ha! ha!—Why I don't think Laura has been insensible to my amorous glances!—Only I have never yet had an opportunity of explaining myself.

ALICE.

[*Aside*.—An old fool!—I'll turn this to Viola's account.] Lord, Sir, what a Turk you are among the women! Marrying a young girl of eighteen, and seducing a married woman of twenty, at the same time! I declare, I should not expect it from you!

ALDOBRAND.

Psha! psha! the older a man grows, the better use he should make of his time.—But tell me, Alice, how can I contrive to get a private interview with Laura?—Suppose in some disguise? Let me tell you, *disguise* is very useful to us men of gallantry.

ALICE.

No bad thought, Sir!—What say you to the dress of a Monk?

Monk? It will not be the first time that garb has covered designs as pious as yours.

ALDOBRAND.

A Monk's habit!—Zounds! a man might as well make love in his shroud! 'Tis a monument erected to signify the decease of human frailty.

ALICE.

Oh! no, Sir! It will only, like other monuments, point out where the *remains* are deposited.—But, Sir, you know, a little money will be necessary for this business.

ALDOBRAND.

Money!

ALICE.

Certainly, Sir! Generosity is the only test of a lover's being in earnest.

A I R.

A fig for all your whining stuff,
 Fine speeches sweet as honey;
 Of love you can't give proof enough,
 Except you give your money:
 Were I your mistress, faith and troth,
 Your av'rice soon would lose me!
 For compliments are but mere froth—
 You must, good Sir, excuse me!

Of all the arrows Love can boast,
 The golden ones are best, Sir;
 And he who boldly bids the most
 Can never be in jest, Sir.
 'Tis true that I make rather free;
 But, faith! you shan't refuse me:
 So draw your purse-strings now, d'ye see—
 Or else you must excuse me.

ALDOBRAND, (*Giving her Money.*)

But, egad! I run a great hazard here.—Indeed, it is true, I have no other means to get at Laura, than by risking Viola in Octavio's house: but then I must depend on your watchful care over her, Alice!

C 2

ALICE.

THE STRANGERS AT HOME.

ALICE.

Trust to me, Sir.

ALDOBRAND.

If the young flut should dare to listen to him—If she should forget herself so far, as to——

ALICE.

Follow her own inclinations, as you do, her crime would certainly be of the blackest dye.

ALDOBRAND.

Psha! But you know the weakness and inexperience of young girls.

ALICE.

For which reason their faults are to be more severely punished! Well, I admire the men! who, while they are continually boasting a superiority of understanding, very modestly reserve to themselves the privilege of committing acts of folly with impunity.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *An Apartment in OCTAVIO's House.**Enter REGNALTO and LAURENCE.*

LAURENCE.

Lord, Sir! we have waited a great while to see Signor Octavio. I dare say he will excuse our going now. Ceremony, I am told, is quite out of fashion with great folks.

REGNALTO.

What, would you quit his house without thanking him for your liberty? Do you not feel the warmth of gratitude for so inestimable a gift?

A I R.

Grief, thy tyrant reign is o'er,
Now I tread my native shore!
Mirth, fair Freedom's sister guest,
Shall impart her choicest zest
To each flask of gen'rous wine
Gaily offer'd at her shrine:
See the sparkling glass goes round;
Care, avaunt! tis hallow'd ground!

LAURENCE.

LAURENCE.

I think humility should teach us, that to wait among the servants is the properest situation for us.—I hear them now at supper, Sir; and, as we are but slaves——

REGNALTO.

Slaves! the noble Octavio will receive us as friends.

LAURENCE.

Then, Sir, for that very reason we should go to supper!—When a generous man entertains his friends at his own house, he is always best pleased to see them eat heartily.

REGNALTO.

Peace! Here comes Octavio.

Enter OCTAVIO.

Generous Octavio! we owe you thanks which language can never express.

OCTAVIO.

Silence, Sir, will be the most acceptable eloquence on that subject. Your mien and deportment bespeak you of no vulgar rank.

LAURENCE, (*Aside.*)

He says nothing of my mien and deportment.

[OCTAVIO and REGNALTO converse *aside*.]

OCTAVIO.

Do not mistake me; I have not the smallest wish to know any thing you may desire to conceal. No one is under restraint here: as long as it suits your convenience, make this your home; and accept, in the mean time, whatever my house affords.

LAURENCE.

Thank you, my lord! I wish we had known as much before; perhaps we should have made free: I am sure I should. But to night we sup at Signor Regnalto's; though, I think, a little snack before supper——

[REGNALTO *frowns*.]OCTAVIO, (*To REGNALTO.*)

What! were you acquainted with Regnalto?

LAURENCE.

Yes, my lord; and he had a very great regard for him, too, or I am much mistaken.

OCTAVIO.

THE STRANGERS AT HOME.

OCTAVIO.

Perhaps, then, you know his sister?

REGNALTO.

Alas, Sir! I fear she has forgotten me. It is ten years ago since I held the little prattler on my knee.

LAURENCE.

And now, I suppose, Signor Octavio would be glad, in turn, to hold the little prattler on *his* knee.

OCTAVIO.

Alas! had Viola a parent living, there would be no longer any obstacle to our happiness: but, to have my hopes blasted thus, by an avaricious guardian!——

A I R.

When Prudence opposes the dictates of Love,
A parent may fairly our choice disapprove:
'Tis kind, then, to save us,
From what would enslave us;
To tell us the tale of Experience with truth,
And check by advice the wild fallies of youth!

But when Prudence smiles on the soft nuptial band,
And Affection and Reason are join'd hand in hand;
With Hymen's torch lighted,
Our mutual faith plighted;
Alas! how severe is Fate's partial decree,
That cruelly tears me, my charmer, from thee!

Sir, I will confer on you what, to the noble mind, is one of the most acceptable favours—an opportunity of shewing your gratitude. I love Signora Viola: here is a letter, in which I propose that she should fly with me this evening, from the power of the wretch with whom her unsuspecting brother too hastily entrusted her. This letter you shall do me the favour to deliver.

LAURENCE, (*Aside.*)

A mighty pretty employ my master has got into!

OCTAVIO.

I have invited Aldobrand to bring the charming Viola with him to-day: but as I hardly expect any success from that scheme, this letter is my last resource.

Enter

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

The captain of the ship from Algiers, Sir, begs to speak with you. *[Exit.]*

OCTAVIO.

Adieu! I will not offend your zeal to serve me, by urging that secrecy on which my success depends. *[Exit.]*

REGNALTO.

Laurence!

LAURENCE.

Sir!

REGNALTO.

This is rather a singular situation!

LAURENCE.

Not at all, Sir! Nothing can be more regular. When a lover thinks of marrying his mistress, her nearest relation should always be one of the first persons consulted on the business.—But here comes my dear Alice!

REGNALTO.

Don't discover who I am, Laurence.

LAURENCE.

I won't, Sir; I won't!—How her eyes sparkle while she is looking for me!

REGNALTO.

Enquire after my sister.

LAURENCE.

I will, Sir.—Pretty rogue!—Pretty rogue!

REGNALTO.

I am very impatient—

LAURENCE.

Yes, Sir; so am I!

Enter ALICE.

ALICE.

Ah! my poor Laurence!—*(Embracing him.)*

LAURENCE.

LAURENCE.

Poor indeed, Alice!—I—I—Well! and how d'ye do? I had a thousand things to say to you: but they are all jumbled together; and, like a great crowd trying to get out of the playhouse, they press on one another till they quite choak up the passage.

ALICE.

You are wasted away prodigiously!

LAURENCE.

Aye! I am not the man I was, Alice.

ALICE.

I am very sorry for it, Laurence!

LAURENCE.

When you and I parted, I was as plump as good living and laughing could make me; but now I may, indeed, say—my wife is my better half!

[REGNALTO *pulls his Sleeve.*

And pray, how does your young lady do?—Pretty little soul! she——

ALICE.

Why, I'll tell you!—But I see we are not alone. Who is that?

LAURENCE.

A brother captive of mine. He is both deaf and dumb, so you may say what you will before him.

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

The rogue has not lost his old knack at invention.

ALICE.

La! what a pity it is, that such a well-looking man should have any deficiencies!

LAURENCE.

But tell me, how is your young lady?

ALICE.

As well as any poor girl can be, when she is doom'd to marry a miserly old guardian; who tells her, forsooth, that she shall find a father in him.

REGNALTO,

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

An old villain!

LAURENCE.

Well, Alice, and do you think there so any thing so much amiss in a husband's becoming a father!

ALICE.

Signor Regnalto, he says, has certainly died in slavery.— Now I think of it, can you tell me any news of our old master?

LAURENCE.

I can't indeed, Alice; so don't ask me any thing about him.

ALICE.

Poor man! Gone, I suppose! I am sorry for him.

LAURENCE.

We shall never have such another master!

ALICE.

No, never! He was the most good temper'd creature! One of the best men in the world for a servant to live with. So easily cheated!

LAURENCE.

Easily cheated! No, no, Alice! That's too much.

ALICE.

Nay, Laurence, I am sure you know it as well as any body living. How many bottles of his best wine did you drink, and made him believe the rats got into the cellar and eat away the corks?

LAURENCE.

Lord! Lord!

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

I shall make some interesting discoveries.

LAURENCE.

Not another word, Alice!

ALICE.

Why, what the deuce are you afraid of? You may be sure a dumb man can't *make any words* about the matter.

REGNALTO, (*Aside to LAURENCE.*)

'Tis lucky for you, firrah, that you have deprived me of my speech!

D

ALICE.

ALICE.

Hey-day!—What, can he whisper?

LAURENCE.

No; but he makes a queer comical kind of a noise; which I, who am used to him, can understand as well as if he spoke ever so distinctly.

ALICE.

And what does he mean?

LAURENCE.

Why, to let me know he is hungry, as I am: and, i'faith, 'tis no wonder, considering how long it is since we tasted roast-meat! Let us take him home with us, Alice. You will find him a mighty agreeable companion; he will never contradict you!

ALICE.

I declare, he seems as if he understood every word we say!

LAURENCE.

Oh, he is very intelligent; I can teach him any thing.—But come! Never did soldier long more for conquest than I do to attack my supper.—My dear Alice, we'll be as merry as love and good wine can make us. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter OCTAVIO and MONTANO.

OCTAVIO.

Heavens! Montano, what a difference must this Algerine habit make in you! when even I did not discover you, who but three years ago was the most intimate friend you had in Florence.

MONTANO.

But Laura!—

OCTAVIO.

Inconsolable for your loss, she sequester'd herself from the world for some time.

MONTANO.

That was kind!

OCTAVIO.

At length, however, to the surprise of every one, after slighting the first noblemen in Florence, she suddenly married a young stranger.

MONTANO.

MONTANO.

A stranger!

OCTAVIO.

Named Lucilio. Gentle, yet lively in his manners; in his person, an Adonis in miniature.

MONTANO.

Do not oppress me with his praises; rather say that he is base! unworthy!—that my sword——

OCTAVIO.

Hold, Montano! I conjure you, by our friendship!—Lucilio and Laura are here. Consider, this house is their sanctuary: retire but for a moment, you shall see Laura presently; nay, you shall even speak to her.—I beg only a moment's delay.

[MONTANO and OCTAVIO retire.]

Enter LAURA and ROSA.

LAURA.

Oh, Rosa! this uncertainty of my Montano's fate, like the torturing arts of medicine, protracts my unhappy life but too long!

ROSA.

Upon my word, Madam, you must think me a very complaisant husband, thus to make me the confidante of your affection for another!

LAURA.

You are a strange girl! However, I must own, it was a lucky thought for me, which suggested this scheme of calling you my husband, to get rid of the importunities of my lovers.

ROSA.

Yes, really! and lucky for me, too; from your humble companion in petticoats, to become your lord and master in breeches.—I am sure I may truly say, *marriage has made a man of me!*

LAURA.

But hear me, Rosa!

ROSA.

Rosa!—you forget that I am your husband! Aye, and so kind! and so indulgent, too! Am not I the best of husbands? [LAURA sighs.] Ah! you will never know my value, till you have got your beloved Signor Montano; and then you'll soon find the difference between us!

D 2

LAURA.

LAURA.

You trifler!

ROSA.

However, though we may forget ourselves in private, let us at least take care to behave like husband and wife in public; that is no more than many married couples oblige themselves to do. But, seriously, my dear Madam, is it possible you can doubt Montano's constancy? Duty and reason will secure——

LAURA.

Duty and reason, when opposed to love!—Oh, Rosa!

A I R.

In vain, when with the fatal dart,
(Unerring in his aim)
The little Archer wounds the heart,
Does Reason urge her claim:
The pow'rful sun of Beauty's eyes
Beams forth too bright a ray;
She thaws cold Duty with her sighs,
And Reason melts away!

OCTAVIO and MONTANO *come forward.*

OCTAVIO, (*To Laura.*)

My friend Ibrahim is lately from Algiers, Madam.

[*Introduces MONTANO, then walks apart with ROSA.*]

LAURA.

I—I—had a friend carried to that part of the world, Sir, for whom I am much interested.

MONTANO,

[*Aside*—How guilt flushes her cheeks!] I knew him well, Madam.

LAURA.

You knew him——a——his name was——

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

Zounds! I forgot to wait for my name.

LAURA.

LAURA.

Montano; a native of Florence.

MONTANO.

Montano!—He—he—was my friend, Madam.

LAURA.

Then you can tell me news of him! [*Aside*—Now for life or death!]

MONTANO.

He is no longer considered as a Christian slave. He has taken the turban. I myself saw him last in the Algerine habit.

LAURA.

Heaven and earth!

MONTANO.

I have heard him often repeat the name of Laura.

LAURA.

Indeed!—You distress me, Sir!

MONTANO.

Montano lov'd her once; lov'd her, as the slave who now adores her!

[*Seizing LAURA's Hand.*]

LAURA.

You are bold, Sir!

MONTANO.

And is that, Madam, a fault, in the estimation of a lady?

LAURA.

I have a husband, Sir, who will answer whether it ought not to be so in mine!—Signor Octavio, a word with you.

[*Walks aside with OCTAVIO.*]

ROSA comes forward.

MONTANO.

And do you, Sir, take upon you to chastise every one who dares to love that lady?

ROSA.

Not I, upon my soul, Sir! It would be a very troublesome office. Besides, it is too flattering to my vanity, to have my wife universally beloved——

MONTANO.

MONTANO.

She was beloved by Montano! Did you know him, Sir?

ROSA.

Montano! Montano!—Oh! the man who went one afternoon to fish in the Mediterranean, and was himself caught by an Algerine rover!

MONTANO.

Did you know Montano, young Sir?

ROSA.

Oh! yes, Sir! I recollect he had the vanity to be my rival. Poor man! I ought not to abuse him; for I owe him infinite obligations, for the merriment Laura and I have so often had at his expence!

MONTANO.

'Sdeath! Sir, you dare not repeat what you say!

ROSA.

Really, Sir, I don't desire it. Tautology in conversation is very disagreeable.

MONTANO.

If Montano were here——

ROSA.

Why, if he were, Sir, I should certainly pity the poor devil! To be laugh'd at by a successful rival would be intolerable; and, really, I could not help it!——Ha! ha! ha!

A I R.

When first I began, Sir, to ogle the ladies,
And prattle soft nothings, as a pretty fellow's trade is;
While with rapturous praises I dwelt on each feature,
If I stole a fly kiss, 'twas—'Fye, you wicked creature!'
But soon, in tones lower, and softer, and sweeter,
Half-pleas'd, they would whisper—'Fye, fye, you wicked
'creature!'

Indeed, my attractions no gallantry needed,
Each evening still conquests to conquests succeeded:
Perplex'd how so many fond claims I should parry,
To settle all disputes, I resolv'd, faith, to marry!
Then press'd lovely Laura, in language still sweeter,
Till, blushing, she whisper'd—'I'm yours, you wicked creature!'

MONTANO.

MONTANO.

Hark'e, Signor Lucilio; I will not hear Montano insulted with impunity! I shall walk by the river-side, two miles from the city, at six to-morrow morning! You understand me, Sir?

ROSA.

[*Aside*—A pretty scrape I am got into!]
—Perfectly, Sir! You find the air from the water beneficial to your health.

MONTANO.

Insulting coward! draw instantly!

ROSA.

[*Looking round, and perceiving OCTAVIO approach to part them.*] Zounds, Sir! with all my heart, This is not to be borne!—Signor Octavio, nothing but the respect I bear you, prevents my punishing that boaster as he deserves! Your presence protects him from my rage! [*Aside to LAURA*—Let us be gone; I am frightened out of my wits!]

OCTAVIO.

Signor Lucilio, I am concerned for my friend's warmth!

ROSA.

As to that, Sir, I am very happy you interfered. I declare, I tremble to think what might have been the consequence!

LAURA.

Signor Octavio, what has passed will, I am sure, plead my apology for begging your permission to retire.

QUARTETTO.

LAURA.

Good Signor, you'll excuse me!—
Pray don't, my dear, refuse me!
Lucilio, let us go.

ROSA.

Laura, you must excuse me!—
Satisfaction you shan't refuse me,
Before I go.

OCTAVIO.

Good Signor, you'll excuse me!
Pray don't, my friend, refuse me.—

Hold,

Hold, Sir, you must excuse me!—
Pray, good Lucilio, go!

LAURA.

Be by your reason aided!
Why won't you be persuaded?
Hear me!
Come, your passion smother!
For this you'll thank me, some day or other.
Lucilio, let us go.—
Signor Octavio, with thanks to you, Sir,
Adieu, adieu, Sir!—
Lucilio, let us go.

ROSA.

No, I'll not be persuaded!—
Hear me!—
Eh! well, then, my passion I'll try to smother.
Adieu, Signor! I go.—
But I shall find, Sir, some time or other,
For a private word, or so.

OCTAVIO.

Why won't you be persuaded?
Hear me!
Hold! Before a lady,
Your anger smother.—
Pray, good Lucilio, go:
You may, you know, find some time or other,
For a private word, or so.

MONTANO.

No, Sir, I shan't excuse you!
Justice I won't refuse you,
Before you go!—
No, I'll not be persuaded!—
Hear me!—
My anger I cannot smother!—
Nay, Sir, you shall not go!
Well, I shall find, Sir, some time or other,
For a private word, or so.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, REGNALTO'S House.

Enter ALICE, and LAURENCE with a Bottle of Wine in one Hand and Bread in the other.

LAURENCE.

TELL the cook to make haste, Alice. I like my victuals rather under done.

ALICE.

You have been us'd to eat your meat rare, I suppose?

LAURENCE.

Yes, the meat that came to my share in Algiers was very rare, indeed!—not above once a month.

ALICE.

And how did they treat you, Laurence? Tell me all about it.

LAURENCE.

They treated me with my *board*, to be sure—to sleep on, I mean; a scarcity of bread and water; and plenty of stripes and hard labour. For my part, I had rather pay my own way in Florence, than be *treated* so by the best Algerine of 'em all!

ALICE.

Pray, Laurence, had your master many wives?

LAURENCE.

Wives! aye, in every hole and corner of his house: they ran about like rabbits in a warren!

ALICE.

And did not you turn poacher now and then, and snap up a stray rabbit?—Eh! Laurence?

LAURENCE.

Not I, indeed! I had a much keener appetite for a fat capon.—Hunger is a bitter enemy to gallantry!—Besides, the Infidels have ways of keeping their wives to themselves, which we have not yet attain'd.

E

ALICE.

ALICE.

By making slaves of them!—Thank my stars, that odious fashion does not prevail in Christendom!

LAURENCE.

“No, the matter is just revers’d with us: in all Christian countries, the wives keep their husbands in subjection.”—But here comes Madam Viola!

Enter VIOLA.

VIOLA.

Honest Laurence, I am rejoic’d to see you once more at home!

LAURENCE.

Thank ye, Ma’am!—I am much rejoiced to see myself here!

VIOLA.

I imagine you have had a sufficient sample of travelling?

LAURENCE.

Enough to last me my life, Ma’am!

VIOLA.

And what think you of the men and manners where you have been?

LAURENCE.

As for the men, the least said about them is the best; and, as for their manners, egad! I never was treated with so much ill-manners, by any other set of people, before or since!

VIOLA.

Laurence, you are released from the chains of a tyrant, just time enough to see me in fetters!

R O N D E A U.

Woman’s fate is still distressing,
Be her lot whate’er it will;
Man perverts her every blessing
To a cause of future ill.

If with charms her form enduing,
Nature kindest care employs,
Man, the gaudy prize pursuing,
Conquers first, and then destroys.

Riches

Riches serve but to entoil her ;
 Like the bee with honey stor'd,
 Her wealth allures the cruel spoiler,
 And dooms her—victim of her hoard.

“ To-morrow is the day fix'd by my inexorable guardian
 “ to make me his wretched wife.—Oh, for the presence of a
 “ brother, to save me from this living death !”

Enter REGNALTO.

But Alice tells me you can give no tidings of the unfortunate
 Regnalto?

LAURENCE.

I know no more of him than this good man!

[*Pointing to* REGNALTO.

VIOLA.

And who is he?

LAURENCE.

He can't tell you that himself; he is dumb.

ALICE.

The poor fellow is just return'd from slavery, Madam !

VIOLA.

Perhaps he may have seen my brother: I'll question him.
 How complacently he smiles upon me! I hope I shall be able
 to understand him.

LAURENCE.

Well, Ma'am, my wine is out; so we'll leave you with our
 silent friend, while we go and toast you in bumpers from a
 fresh bottle!

[*Exeunt* ALICE and LAURENCE.

VIOLA.

Poor slave! perhaps he has a sister in some foreign land, who,
 like me, mourns the absence of a brother! [*Taking a Picture*
from her Pocket.] Here is Regnalto's picture!—Precious image
 of a beloved brother, let me press thee to my heart!

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

“ How shall I support myself in this trying scene!”

VIOLA.

If he has ever seen Regnalto, he will remember the likeness.
 [*Shews it to him; he looks at it attentively, and shakes his Head.*]
 Alas! he knows not the resemblance.

E 2

REGNALTO.

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

I had almost forgot my errand! [*Pulls her by the Sleeve.*]

VIOLA.

What would you with me, gentle slave? [REGNALTO offers her the Letter from OCTAVIO, and makes Signs of Secrecy.] A letter! [*Opening it hastily.*] And from OCTAVIO! [*Reading.*] 'Dearest Viola! our situation must plead my excuse for the proposal I thus abruptly offer. To-morrow is to make you the wife of Aldobrand; suffer me to snatch you from the misery in which this detested marriage would involve us. Do not doubt my honour: warm as my passion is for the charming Viola, I can never forget the respect due to the sister of Regnalto——'

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

Noble youth!

VIOLA, (*Reading.*)

—'On a word depends your fate and mine. I shall be with some chosen friends, at the balcony which looks into the garden, a little before midnight. Let me hope that happy hour will consign you to the care of the impatient OCTAVIO!'——What am I to do! [REGNALTO pleads for OCTAVIO in dumb Shew.] He endeavours to persuade me; he pleads for his benefactor.—Will you accompany me?—[REGNALTO puts his Knee to the Ground, and kisses her Hand.] Then I will meet OCTAVIO! [*She kisses the Letter, and intimates that she agrees to the Proposal.*]

Enter ALDOBRAND.

My guardian here!

ALDOBRAND.

Hey-day! whom have we here? A lover in disguise! This is your gallant-elect, I see, Madam; and he is kissing hands on his appointment!—Who the devil are you?

VIOLA.

He is now my servant.

ALDOBRAND.

That is to say, you are his *mistress*. So I suspected!

VIOLA.

How you misunderstand things! He is——

ALDOBRAND.

I ask him, and not you, what he is!—I suppose he can speak for himself?

VIOLA.

VIOLA.

Indeed he can't, Sir.

ALDOBRAND.

Not speak for himself! A pretty kind of a lover, then, he must be!

VIOLA.

A lover! The poor creature is just come from Algiers; and I have employ'd him as my servant, from motives of compassion.—I tell you, he can't speak.

ALDOBRAND.

But I suppose he can eat and drink; and that comes very expensive!

VIOLA.

And is this the way you think to gain my regard, by thwarting me in every thing I propose?

ALDOBRAND.

Nay, nay! my dear wife, that is to be! I'm sure I'll do all I can to make you happy. I agree, then, to take this speechless gentleman into our service.

VIOLA.

I thank you, Signor.

ALDOBRAND.

Thanks! And is that all I am to receive from your lips, Viola?—I must! indeed, I must!—[*Offering to kiss her.*]—Well, I shall make you pay for all to-morrow! Those rosy lips will be mine when we are married, Viola!

VIOLA.

When we are married, they shall be yours; but, till then, good Signor, they must remain my own! [Exit.]

Enter FABIO.

ALDOBRAND.

Well, Fabio, what news?

FABIO.

Why, Sir, on this occasion, we may really say, *no news is good news*: for I can hear nothing of Regnalto. You may depend upon it, he is not in Florence.

ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

I am heartily glad of it, good Fabio! and will double the reward I promis'd you.

[ALDOBRAND and FABIO sit down at a Table.]

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

Fortune has thrown an excellent opportunity in my way, to discover the villainy of this false friend, in whose honour I have so unwarily confided.

ALDOBRAND.

Hey, Roberto! get wine and glasse: and, d'ye hear! shew Dummy the way to the cellar. We must try to make something of him!—[*Exeunt* ROBERTO and REGNALTO.]—Come, Fabio! let's sit down and enjoy ourselves! You have put me in charming spirits; and we'll have a bottle of my best wine on the strength of your good news!

Re-enter ROBERTO with Glasses.

Well, Roberto, does he appear to be a handy fellow?

ROBERTO.

O, yes, Sir! [REGNALTO enters.] he seems to know the ways about the house as well as if he had been us'd to it!

ALDOBRAND.

Aye, aye! we must converse with him by signs: I dare say he'll soon be able to find us out.

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

I hope so!

ALDOBRAND.

Roberto, you need not stay: let him wait on us.

[*Exit* ROBERTO.]
A dumb waiter is sometimes very convenient!

FABIO.

Why, Sir, you retain not only your spirits, but your wit!

ALDOBRAND.

My dear Fabio, the news you bring of Regnalto gives me new life! Let him but keep out of my sight, and my bottle in it—and then, Time and Care, I defy you!

A I R.

A I R.

The ills of life in vain assail,
 I never yet would yield me;
 Nor shall their malice e'er prevail,
 While frolic Mirth can shield me:
 Like curs they snarl, but dare not bite;
 I heed them not at all, Sir!
 But laugh at all their harmless spite,
 And still sing—Tol de rol lol, Sir.

I ever scorn'd, with face of woe,
 Proud dames to dangle after;
 But bent with smiles young Cupid's bow,
 And tipt his shafts with laughter:
 Success still crown'd each merry dart,
 Black, fair, brown, short, or tall, Sir;
 I vanquish'd ev'ry female heart,
 With—Tol de rol lol, de rol, Sir.

“ Let first-rate fingers stretch their throats,
 “ In fine *falsetto* squeaking;
 “ With new and strange unnatural notes,
 “ Applause from fashion seeking:
 “ The blockhead Connoisseurs among
 “ E'en let them trill and squall, Sir;
 “ Give me, my boy! a jolly song,
 “ That ends with—Tol de rol lol, Sir.”

In spite of Dons so grave and wise,
 Till o'er old Styx I ferry,
 I always will most highly prize
 Whatever's blithe and merry.
 May Love and Laughter ever be
 Attendant on my call, Sir!
 Here's what I've always lov'd, d'ye see—
 A glass to—Tol de rol lol, Sir!

Where do you think Regnalto is now, Fabio?

FABIO.

At a pretty good distance from us, I'll answer for it. You know I bargain'd with a Turkish merchant to buy him at Algiers, and transport him from thence to Constantinople!

ALDOBRAND.

So you told me!

FABIO.

FABIO.

After which, he was to be convey'd to Arabia, and sold to a chief of the wild Arabs.

REGNALTO, (*Aside.*)

A pretty journey these good people have mark'd out for me!

"FABIO.

"And, I dare say, by this time, he is as expert at robbing a caravan as the best freebooter among them.

"ALDOBRAND.

"Then he has travell'd to some end, Fabio.

"FABIO.

"Yes, Sir! and I hope that will be the end of his travels.

"ALDOBRAND.

"With all my heart! Give Dummy a bumper to that toast—" May Regnalto end his travels where he is now!

[*"They drink, and give REGNALTO a Glass of Wine.*

"FABIO.

"Well done, honest Dummy! Egad! he empties his glass to that toast!

"ALDOBRAND.

"He little thinks that he is drinking to the captivity of his old acquaintance; for I dare say Regnalto and he have had the bastinado together many a time in Algiers."

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Signor Lucilio, Sir.

ALDOBRAND.

Lucilio! What the devil can he want with me? I hope he has not discovered my designs on his wife!—Shew him up.—Fabio, let Dummy retire with you for the present.

[*Exit REGNALTO and FABIO.*

Enter ROSA.

Signor Lucilio, ten thousand thanks for this honour! Believe me, I am heartily glad to see you!

ROSА.

I am come, Signor Aldobrand, to request your advice and assistance in a matter of great moment to me..

"ALDOBRAND.

“ALDOBRAND.

“I am sure I shall be particularly happy——

“ROSA.

“I know you are a man of gallantry——

“ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

“Egad! I am sorry for that.

“ROSA.

“And therefore I wish for your counsel.—But, are we out
“of hearing?

“ALDOBRAND.

“As snug as a conclave of cardinals!”

ROSA.

Give me leave to ask you, what measures do you think I
ought to pursue with the man who has dar'd to make love to my
wife?

ALDOBRAND.

A—a——[*Aside*—Oh! that I were but safe out of the room!]
Why, surely—is it possible that——

ROSA.

Possible! why not, Sir? Is not Laura handsome enough to be
an object of temptation?

ALDOBRAND.

Upon my soul, I think so, Sir! Don't mistake me. [*Aside*—
What shall I say to him?]

ROSA.

When I consider the nature of the affront!——

ALDOBRAND.

But consider, at the same time, good Signor, how liable we
all are to frailty! Temptation is an enemy who wrestles
with us through life, growing stronger as we grow weaker;
and if youth can't resist him, 'tis not to be wondered at that he
should easily trip up an old man's heels!

ROSA.

I am resolv'd to punish him severely!

ALDOBRAND.

[*Aside*—I shall be expos'd to all Florence!] Are there no
apologies which you could be prevailed on to receive?

F

ROSA.

ROSA.

What apologies can he offer, after having had the assurance to threaten my life!——

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

I threaten his life!—What the devil does he mean now?

ROSA.

The presumption to challenge me to single combat!

ALDOBRAND.

Challenge you!—Upon my veracity, I never dreamt of such a thing!

ROSA.

Yes, the haughty Algerine dared me to measure swords with him!

ALDOBRAND.

The haughty Algerine!

ROSA.

Ibrahim, the commander of the vessel last from Algiers!

ALDOBRAND.

[*Aside*—I am restor'd to life!] Give me your hand, my dear Signor Lucilio! We'll have the scoundrel hang'd, drawn, quarter'd, flay'd, and carbonaded!—A dog! a rascal! a villain! —a——such an abominable attempt!

ROSA.

But how shall we manage, my dear friend? I have every thing to dread from him while he is at liberty. You are a magistrate, and can assist me.

ALDOBRAND.

He shall be thrown into prison in two hours time!

ROSA.

Will that be strictly legal?

ALDOBRAND.

Legal! aye, to be sure, if it can serve a friend. Laws were made for the benefit of society; and are not our friends the very flower of society?

ROSA.

But let us be careful not to infringe the strict letter of the law.

ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

Aye, that is a true oracle; always doubtful in it's meaning. We lawyers are the priests, and who so proper to expound it as we who make it? The letter of the law reminds me of a fanciful cloud in a summer sky; though no two persons can agree in what it really represents, you may look at it till you make what you will of it.

" ROSA.

" And yet how beautiful are those clouds when gilded by the sun of equity!

" ALDOBRAND.

" Psha! psha! when the clouds gather fast, the sun of equity, as you call it, sometimes finds it a devilish hard task to shine through them." But come, let us to business; we have not a moment to lose. I'll dispatch the officers of justice after this Ibrahim, and they'll seize him the instant they set eyes on him!

ROSA.

Well, Signor Aldobrand, I perceive you improve on the poets, who represent Justice as blind: you kindly remove the band from her eyes, that she may distinguish objects clearly.

ALDOBRAND.

Modern Justice is only blind to the faults of her friends.

ROSA.

And what does she do with her sword?

ALDOBRAND.

Reserves that for their enemies.

ROSA.

Ha! ha! ha!—Then her scales only remain to be dispos'd of!

ALDOBRAND.

Which are too useful to be parted with. They are for the receipt of fees; one scale for the plaintiff, and the other for the defendant: of course, you know, that which is best fill'd makes the other kick the beam!—And so much for justice.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE, the House of OCTAVIO.

Enter OCTAVIO and ALICE.

OCTAVIO.

Well, Alice, then the charming Viola is permitted by her guardian to visit this house to-day? You may depend on my gratitude!

F 2

" ALICE.

“ ALICE.

“ I will, Sir; though I own it is not a quality on which, generally speaking, I place the greatest dependance.

“ OCTAVIO.

“ Surely you do not doubt it's existence: you do not think it a mere phantom.”

ALICE.

Why really, Sir, my experience has taught me, that gratitude is something like a ghost; every body talks of it, but nobody sees it appear!

OCTAVIO.

As to that, I can easily conjure up the apparition!—[*Giving her a Purse.*] How do you like it?

ALICE.

Oh! I admire your *spirit*, I assure you, Sir! It could not appear in a prettier shape.

OCTAVIO.

But tell me, dear Alice! how am I to elude the vigilance of Aldobrand?

ALICE.

Very easily, Sir. You must know the old fool expects to meet Laura here, with whom he is most desperately in love!—But I see him coming: I'll engage him, while you slip down stairs, and entertain your mistress. [Exit OCTAVIO.

Enter ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

Here I am! so amorous—but so frighten'd! My heart is like a volcano in Iceland; fire and frost at the same time. If Laura should not requite my passion—if I should fail, Alice!—

ALICE.

Fail, Sir! there is no such word in the lover's dictionary.

ALDOBRAND.

Then I suppose mine is the old edition; for, egad! I think I see it in the title-page, in black letter. It frightens me so, that I can't turn over a new leaf!

ALICE.

Come, Sir, I'll comfort you with an example, in a ballad which I learnt of an English captain who us'd to visit my poor master, Signor Regnalto.

A I R.

A I R.

Young Roger the ploughman, who wanted a mate,
 Went along with his daddy a courting to Kate ;
 With nosegay so large, in his holiday cloaths,
 (His hands in his pockets) away Roger goes.
 Now he was as bashful as bashful could be ;
 And Kitty, poor girl, was as bashful as he :
 So he bow'd, and he star'd, and he let his hat fall ;
 Then he grinn'd, scratch'd his head, and said—nothing at all.

If awkward the swain, no less awkward the maid ;
 She simper'd and blush'd, with her apron-string play'd :
 Till the old folks, impatient to have the thing done,
 Agreed that young Roger and Kate should be one.
 In silence the young ones both nodded assent :
 Their hands being join'd, to be married they went ;
 Where they answer'd the parson with voices so small,
 You'd have sworn that they both had said—nothing at all.

But mark what a change ! In the course of a week,
 Kate quite left off blushing, Hodge boldly could speak ;
 Could joke with his deary, laugh loud at the jest :
 She could coax, too, and fondle, as well as the best.
 And, ashamed of past folly, they've often declar'd,
 To encourage young folks, who at courtship are scar'd ;
 If at first to your aid some assurance you call,
 When once you are us'd to it, 'tis—nothing at all.

A lover is like a swimmer : fear will be sure to sink him.

ALDOBRAND.

Then, egad ! I shall certainly go to the bottom, Alice !

ALICE.

Never fear that, Sir !—Trust to the cork-jacket I have brought you.—[*Shewing his Disguise*]—This will keep your head above water, I'll warrant.—Come, Sir, let me help you on with it.

ALDOBRAND, (*Putting on the Friar's Dress.*)

Heigho ! make haste, and lead me to Laura, that I may face the enemy, while I have courage enough left for the attack.

ALICE.

I'll go and reconnoitre, Sir.

ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

And, d'ye hear? keep an eye on Viola!—You know Octavio is a few years younger than I am; and young girls have a devilish hankering after green fruit! [Exit ALICE.]

Enter FIRELOCK.

FIRELOCK.

Who have we here? a Friar! I did not expect to meet with so holy a man. I was in search of one Signor Aldobrand, a rich old lawyer of this city.—Do you know him, father?

ALDOBRAND.

I know the man!

FIRELOCK.

Perhaps you are his confessor? I'faith! if you are, you must have a troublesome task of it, by all accounts: I am sure you deserve to be paid well for keeping such a batter'd old conscience in repair!

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

How I long to break the rascal's head!

FIRELOCK.

But I can't think where the old fellow can be gone! He was seen to enter this room not half an hour ago.

ALDOBRAND.

Why, what the devil! are you set to watch him, you dog?

FIRELOCK.

Hey-day! here's language for a man of mortification! You seem to have forgot yourself, father.

ALDOBRAND.

Rather so, indeed!—But, if you knew me better, you would find me a true son of the church.

FIRELOCK.

Aye, I dare say! One of those dutiful children who are seldom better pleas'd than when they are drinking their mother-church in full bumpers; and, lest her family should be extinct, like good sons, take all the care in their power to provide her with grandsons.

ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

I forgive your scurrility, friend!—You shall find, that Monkish manners can cover liberality of sentiment.

FIRELOCK.

As an extinguisher covers a candle!—But here come Octavio and Viola.

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

A comfortable situation I shall be in, to be sure! for, though I should be cuckolded before my face, I must, like a snail, draw my horns within my shell!

Enter OCTAVIO and VIOLA.

FIRELOCK.

We are all safe, Sir! the enemy has retreated, and left you master of the field.

OCTAVIO.

Follow Aldobrand, my faithful friend, lest he should return unexpectedly.—But who is this?

FIRELOCK.

Oh! as for this ghostly father, though he may hitherto have been a neutral power, I dare say, he is a true politician; and, now victory has declared for you, will have no objection to become your ally. [*Exit.*]

OCTAVIO.

A lucky thought! This good priest shall join our hands.—You tremble, Viola?

VIOLA.

Oh, Octavio! you will forgive that timidity which makes me start at the precipitancy of a measure——

OCTAVIO.

Which alone can release you from the power of an avaricious tyrant!—I'll submit the case to this worthy man; convinc'd that I could not have fix'd on any person better qualified to decide the matter.

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

I wish to my soul the worthy man were safe at home!—A plague on this masquerading! If he finds me out, I shall have his sword through me in a twinkling!

OCTAVIO.

OCTAVIO.

My good father, this lady is threatened with marriage by her guardian; a wretch whom, if you knew, you must despise!—She has blest'd me with the avowal of her affection!

VIOLA.

That avowal, Octavio, I willingly repeat. Why should I blush to own my acquaintance with Love, while he is the companion of Virtue?

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

The devil take her fine sentiments!

OCTAVIO.

Thus, then, let me seize this charming hand! and our good friend, here, I am persuaded, will cheerfully assist me in making it my own. [ALDOBRAND *shakes his Head.*] “What, you say ‘No!’ Perhaps you are not aware what a sad old fellow this guardian is: he reviles ecclesiastical government wherever he goes; and declares he hates a priest so much, that he is ready to faint at the sight of his habit. He says it resembles charity, for it is always sure to cover a multitude of sins.”

VIOLA.

You seem to be mistaken in the person to whom you apply, Octavio?

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

Most cursedly mistaken, if he knew all!

OCTAVIO.

As to his shaking his head, that is a disorder easily cur'd by a proper application to the palm of the patient's hand!

[*Giving Money to ALDOBRAND.*]ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

Egad! if I refuse money, he'll soon discover me to be no churchman.

[*Taking the Money.*]

OCTAVIO.

Are you better, father?—Not quite cur'd yet, eh!—I must touch the other hand, then.—[*Giving him more Money.*]—Now, I'll answer for it, he'll find himself perfectly well!

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

Then I'll e'en get off while I am well!

[*Going.*]OCTAVIO, (*Stopping him.*)

Not so fast, my good friend!

Enter

Enter ALICE; who starts back with seeming Surprise, and then whispers VIOLA.

VIOLA, (*Aside to ALICE.*)

My guardian, do you say?

ALICE, (*Affecting Astonishment.*)

Bless me, what do I see!—To what a pass of wickedness is this world arrived!—Oh, my poor master! how he has been imposed upon! And now, perhaps, he'll think me an accomplice in the plot. I shall run mad with vexation!—As for you, Signora Viola, I shall take care that you shall never speak another word to that vile seducer! [*Aside to VIOLA*—Tell him immediately how we are circumstanced.]—[*Aside to ALDOBRAND, while VIOLA whispers OCTAVIO*—Ah! my dear Sir, how lucky it was for us all that I came in just at the moment I did!—What deceit there is in the world!

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside to ALICE.*)

A d—n'd deal, indeed!—Alice, you must take care they don't suspect me.

ALICE.

[*Aside to ALDOBRAND*—Leave that to me, Sir.] I blush for you, Signora Viola, to behave so to your guardian!—And as for you, Signor Octavio—

OCTAVIO.

I should have been married by this time, had it not been for that piece of mock sanctity, “who dar'd to receive money for what he never intended to perform.” But I'm resolv'd to take the most signal revenge!

ALICE.

Dear Sir! what do you mean? [*Aside to OCTAVIO*—Stick to that.] Bless me, how your eyes roll! Don't be rash!

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside to ALICE.*)

What is to become of me, Alice?

ALICE.

Surely, Signor Octavio, you don't mean to attempt his life?

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside to ALICE.*)

Hold your tongue! He won't think of killing me, if you don't put him in mind of it!

G

ALICE.

ALICE.

To be sure, the poor gentleman is entirely in your power. It would be the easiest thing in the world to destroy him without it's being discover'd. You might hang him in the garden, or drown him in the river—or shoot him—or—let me see!——

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside to ALICE.*)

The devil's in the wench!—You forget that you are counsel for the defendant!

ALICE, (*Aside to ALDOBRAND.*)

It may happen to the best advocate, who has no retaining fee to remind him: that is the only anchor which can keep him steady to you.

ALDOBRAND, (*Giving her Money.*)

Why, I gave you one this morning! But you seem soon blown from your anchor, as you call it.

ALICE.

Confider, Sir, what a storm we are in!——

OCTAVIO.

It is impossible, my dear Viola! Not even your entreaties can disarm my resentment!

ALICE.

What, Sir! not if he agrees to marry you?

OCTAVIO, (*Aside.*)

Agrees to marry me!—What the devil can she mean now? —On that condition, indeed!——

ALICE.

Leave me to calm the fears of the good man!

OCTAVIO.

Well, father, I leave you to your female friend. Eloquence, you know, is the gift of the sex: I dare say, Alice will persuade you to listen to the voice of reason, though I cannot.

[*Exeunt OCTAVIO and VIOLA.*]

ALDOBRAND.

Egad! if Reason speaks through your voice, I don't wonder that so few people in the world listen to her; for the very tone
of

of it is enough to throw one into a quaking fit!—A pretty sort of an engagement you have form'd for me, Alice! How the devil am I to fulfil it?

ALICE.

Why, Sir, you must e'en run away: that's the most approved remedy, when a man can't fulfil his engagements!

Enter MONTANO; who, seeing ALDOBRAND and ALICE, retires to the Back of the Scene.

“MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

“A confession scene, as I take it: I may chance to profit by it.”

ALDOBRAND.

But then I leave Viola behind me!

ALICE.

I'll take care she shall soon follow you. I can persuade Octavio to any thing. You see I have gain'd his confidence!

ALDOBRAND.

Egad! if you have gain'd his *confidence*, you have made a pretty comfortable addition to your own stock; for I think he has as good a share as any man I ever knew!

ALICE.

I have news to tell you of your beloved Laura!—

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

His beloved Laura!

“ALICE.

“But I fancy, in this jumble of passions, love has sunk to the bottom.

“ALDOBRAND.

“Why, i'faith, fear is the oil of the passions: attempt to mix it with whatever you will, it is always sure to swim at top.

“ALICE.

“Which proves that, with you, love is *weighty*, and fear *light*.
“But I have to inform you, Sir, that Laura left this house on pretence of illness, and that she is now at home, where she expects you.”

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

I'm on the rack!

G 2

• ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

Why, I—I—should like to visit her!—But are you sure
shan't meet with another couple who want to be married?

ALICE.

My dear Signor Aldobrand, consider what an opportunity!
I have settled every thing with Laura's maid: she will admit
you as a friar sent to visit her mistress by her confessor, who is
indisposed.

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

Distraction!

ALDOBRAND.

To personate a confessor!—Excellent!—I—I will go,
Alice!

ALICE.

Then I will step into the garden, to secure Octavio and
Viola in chat. You follow me presently. [*Exit.*]

ALDOBRAND.

Upon my soul, a father confessor, who has the keeping of a
pretty girl's conscience, leads a mighty agreeable life! The
pleasure of giving absolution must be so great, that, like a skilful
physician who delights in being constantly employed, one might
be tempted now and then to make a flaw in a patient's consti-
tution, for the satisfaction of performing the cure!

MONTANO, (*coming forward, and drawing his Sabre.*)

Stop, doctor!

ALDOBRAND.

Ah, good Signor! what would you have? Do you wish to
be married!—Spare my life, and command my services!

MONTANO.

Signor Aldobrand, I have overheard the whole of your
pious conversation; and am so much edified by it, that I am
resolv'd to quit the turban, and assume the religious habit
which you wear!—Yes, I am determined to try the virtues of
that magic garment, which can blind the eyes of a fine woman
to age and infirmity; for, surely, without such assistance, you
could never have presumed to think of gallantry!

ALDOBRAND.

I don't know that!

"MONTANO.

"Can that shrivell'd countenance, and those tottering limbs,
"be form'd for seduction?

"ALDOBRAND."

"ALDOBRAND."

There is no fix'd standard for beauty: and ladies often differ in their tastes!

MONTANO.

We'll settle that point another time. In the mean while, we must exchange dresses; you shall have my vest and turban, in return for your disguise of holiness!

ALDOBRAND.

Turn Mahometan!

MONTANO.

Men of true piety, like you, never regard externals. Come, uncase, my old Adonis! No more words to the bargain.

ALDOBRAND.

Upon my soul, 'tis a devilish hard bargain!

[They exchange Dresses.]

MONTANO.

Now, then, Diffimulation assist me to avenge the cause of an injur'd lover, and punish the lost and guilty Laura!—Signor Aldobrand, one serious word before we part!

ALDOBRAND.

One serious word!—Why then, perhaps, you have hitherto been in jest?

MONTANO.

Dare not, as you regard your life, to follow me; nor to discover whither I am going! And so, adieu! *[Exit.]*

ALDOBRAND.

Good bye to ye!—Heigho! a pretty metamorphosis! *[Looking at himself.]* I am made a mere peg, to hang cast-off cloaths on! A child's doll, dress'd and undress'd ten times in a day! I suppose I shall keep my Algerine dress no longer than till somebody else takes a fancy to it!—Oh, here comes one of the footmen! I may as well begin to strip, for I dare say I must put on his livery.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Signor Montano, my master begs you will conceal yourself immediately. The officers of justice are in quest of you. He suspects foul play, as they are sent hither by Aldobrand, who was seen here just now disguised as a Friar.

ALDOBRAND,

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

So! I have issued a warrant to apprehend myself!

SERVANT.

Hark! the officers are forcing their way in; and my master and his followers are defending the entrance with their swords!
[*Exit.*]

ALDOBRAND.

Ah! 'tis all over with me! Here am I, in my rival's house, with another man's cloaths on my back; having lost my character, my wife, my mistress, and almost lost myself! I am an actual numeration-table of losses; they rise upon me by tens, hundreds, and thousands.—And here come more plagues! How the devil shall I manage to conceal myself! Egad, I'll slip down this stair-case!
[*Exit.*]

Enter OCTAVIO and VIOLA.

OCTAVIO.

Cast away your scruples, my love! and rely upon me.

A I R.

By that eloquent language which speaks in the eyes;
By the ardour which breathes in the lover's sad sighs,
As in absence the nameless soft wishes arise;
I pr'ythee now hear me, my dearest!

By those fond, anxious doubts, which all lovers must feel,
Which, altho' some few moments of bliss they may steal,
Yet fan love's pure flame, and still wound but to heal;
I pr'ythee now hear me, my dearest!

By our hopes, when the moment of meeting is nigh;
When affection no longer can pardon deny;
Hopes which live in a look, in a word, in a sigh;
I pr'ythee now hear me, my dearest!

By my passion, for which words, alas! are too weak;
By that love-dawning blush which now glows on your cheek,
And so kindly avows what your tongue will not speak;
I pr'ythee now hear me, my dearest!

Make yourself perfectly easy, my dear Viola! Montano will protect you. I thought he was here; but I know the agonies of his mind drive him from society, to seek relief in solitude.

Enter ALICE.

Alice! where is the Algerine captain?

ALICE.

ALICE.

Algerine captain!—Oh, you mean the man with the turban, whom I met just now stealing down the dark private stair-case which leads to the garden, with his hands before his face, like a sulky child endeavouring to escape a whipping! There is no fear of your losing him, Sir, except he can creep through the key-hole; for I lock'd the door as I came up, and put the key in my pocket, to prevent old Aldobrand's surprizing us.

*Enter ALDOBRAND, behind.*ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

The door is fast, sure enough!—I must try t'other side, as soon as the coast is clear!

OCTAVIO.

That gentleman whom you met in the Algerine dress is a native of this city; “and unfortunately attach'd to Signora Laura.

“ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

“The devil! then I am discover'd!”

OCTAVIO.

His name is Montano.

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside, and stifling a Laugh.*)

That's very well, i'faith!

OCTAVIO.

I have the strongest reliance on his friendship.

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

He little thinks that my appearance of friendship is like some other friendships—a mere disguise, which I shall throw off as soon as convenient.

OCTAVIO.

In a word, I will entrust Viola to his care, while I stay to face the expected storm.

“ALICE.

“Shall I run and fetch him, Sir?

“OCTAVIO.

“It is by no means necessary: at this unfortunate moment, my conversation would serve only to distress him.

“ALDOBRAND,

“ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

“It would, indeed, most plaguily!

“OCTAVIO.

“Only beg him to accompany Viola to my house by the river-side. Two trusty servants will attend him.

“VIOLA.

“Surely, Octavio, I should be safer under this roof?

“OCTAVIO.

“No, my charmer! Montano will conduct you to a more agreeable asylum; to a place which, I hope, my Viola will shortly call her home.

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

“Yes, egad! I'll take care she shall soon find herself at home!

“OCTAVIO.

“Oh, Montano! I commit my existence into your hands!”
—Tell him, my dear Alice, to watch over her as if she were the darling of his own soul. I know he will with pleasure receive the precious pledge from me.

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

With great pleasure, indeed! “And, I fancy, when once I get the precious pledge in my possession, you will find it no easy matter to redeem it.—But I must retreat to my hiding-place.”

OCTAVIO.

We have no time to lose, my love! Give your hand to my friend, and your guardian!

ALDOBRAND, (*Aside.*)

Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exit.*

VIOLA.

But consider, your friend is unknown to me. I never even saw him.—Oh, Octavio! I have a thousand fears!

OCTAVIO.

Dispel them all, my love! Our constancy will render us invulnerable to the attacks of fortune.

TRIO.

T R I O.

Absence, all ills denouncing,
A fond adieu pronouncing,
We part—all joy renouncing
Until we meet again.
Yet, while these ills enduring,
See Hope, with smiles alluring,
(Blest smiles! all sorrow curing)
Still points to Hymen's chain.

C A T C H.

' How great is the pleasure, how sweet the delight,'
When Love's filken bands willing captives unite!
Well pleas'd in their bondage, his vot'ries remain,
And, proud of subjection, exult in his chain:
Oh, Love! how blissful's thy meed!
The pray'r of thy vot'ries is—ne'er to be freed.
' How great is the pleasure, how sweet the delight,'
When Love's filken bands willing captives unite!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

H

A C T

A C T III.

SCENE, LAURA'S *House*.

LAURA and ROSA.

LAURA.

INDEED, Rosa, my mind is too severely wounded by this dreadful news of Montano.

A I R.

Thou art gone away from me, my love !
 Long shall I rue that luckless day,
 When thou wert torn from me, my love.
 Did but thy heart remain the same,
 As when it left this shore, my love !
 Alas ! it owns another flame ;
 Of me thou think'st no more, my love.

With jealous pangs my bosom torn,
 I wish that fair of thine, my love ;
 That fatal fair ! may treat with scorn
 Those vows which once were mine, my love !
 But, ah ! how sharp Love's venom'd steel ;
 Inconstant tho' thou be, my love,
 Ah ! may'st thou never, never feel,
 What Laura feels for thee, my love !

I cannot muster up spirits enough to execute your scheme.

" ROSA.

" But consider, my dear Madam, it is the only means by
 " which I can save myself from the fury of this mad Algerine."

LAURA.

How can you ask me at this time, when my heart is so sensibly touch'd ?

ROSA.

Well, Madam ! and do not I run the risque of having my heart *sensibly touch'd* by the point of a small-sword ! Let me tell you, that is much the worst touch of the two. I repeat to you, Madam, that old rogue Aldobrand has let Ibrahim escape ; and, while he is at liberty, I dare not venture abroad.

LAURA.

LAURA.

And so you would really wish me to receive this odious visit from Aldobrand——

ROSA.

That I may surprize him with you, and work on the fears of the old wretch, to make him secure Ibrahim.

LAURA.

I don't like your scheme, Rosa. There is an indelicacy in subjecting my ears to be offended with the mention of an illicit passion.

ROSA.

There might be, I grant you, from the lips of a youthful gallant, like Ibrahim; "in whose breast the passion glows hot enough" to scorch the reputation of every female who exposes herself "to it's influence:" but, as for poor old Aldobrand—Lord, Ma'am! in him it is the mere Aurora Borealis of love; a few straggling faint rays from the sun that is set, which vanish almost as soon as they are seen, and have only the appearance of heat without the reality!—To give me a fair occasion for coming into the room, you must scream out; upon which I rush in, and——But who have we here?

Enter FIRELOCK.

FIRELOCK.

My abrupt visit will apologize for itself, Sir, when I tell you that I come to offer you my services in assisting to punish Aldobrand, who is now entering your house disguis'd as a friar.

LAURA, (*Aside to ROSA.*)

Heavens, Rosa! how could he have discover'd——

FIRELOCK.

Do not be surprized: I was inform'd of the whole affair by a very pretty girl at Signor Octavio's.

ROSA, (*To LAURA.*)

He means Alice.

FIRELOCK.

The same, Sir! She order'd me to engage in your service; and I would no more disobey the commands of Beauty than the articles of war.

H 2

LAURA,

LAURA.

Ha! ha! ha!—Perhaps you have expectations of reward from your fair employer?

FIRELOCK.

Why, look ye, Madam! Love and Honour have ever been my commanding officers; and I should not deserve the name of their soldier, if I wanted the inducement of reward to do my duty.

LAURA.

You have been bred a soldier, I presume?

FIRELOCK.

No, Madam; I once had a pretty snug little estate, which my wife and my friends obligingly help'd me soon to get rid of: so, as I was too honest, or too proud, to live by the same means as many of my neighbours, I paid my debts, as far as I could, and took up a brown musquet. The expectation of happier days has supported me through all my misfortunes, and the anticipation of social mirth has smiled on me even in the hour of battle.

A I R.

Fir'd with ardour to engage,
The soldier dares the battle's rage!
When groans, which shall be heard no more,
Echo to the cannon's roar;
When the flying ranks are broke,
And all is lost in clouds of smoke;
Death stalks triumphant o'er the field,
On every side the vanquish'd yield,
And fainting victors scarcely live
Their dear-bought laurels to receive!

Still he blesses the hours when, banishing care,
He shall triumph again in the smiles of the fair;
When wine, wit, and mirth, shall Love's pleasures increase,
And his laurels shall bloom with the olive of peace.

ROSA.

Here comes Aldobrand, I vow!—We must leave you.

LAURA.

Let me accompany you; for I must have a few moments to prepare myself for the meeting.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter

Enter MONTANO in the Friar's Habit, with a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

If you'll sit down a moment, my good father, I'll acquaint Signora Laura that you are here. [Exit.]

MONTANO.

To what a dilemma have my ill stars reduc'd me. My errand here is to tempt that virtue which I hope to find superior to temptation. "I must engage in a conflict where I dread to obtain the victory. If she resists my importunities as Ibrahim, it will at least afford me a satisfaction to find that, though false to love, she is yet true to virtue." But she comes.

Enter LAURA.

LAURA.

Perhaps, Signor Aldobrand, you are not a little surpriz'd at my consenting to this interview?—

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

'Sdeath! then she has really expected Aldobrand!

"LAURA.

"I can venture to assure you, however, that my motives for it are very different from what you may imagine. I hope you will not misinterpret my conduct.

"MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

"No, it seems to speak pretty plainly for itself!"

LAURA.

I rely entirely on your discretion.

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

So it appears.—Alas! she don't seem to have made any use of her own, indeed!

LAURA.

What can occasion his silence? I am in a most awkward situation!—A—a—Sir, I understood that you had something of a particular nature to communicate. [*Aside*—I hope Rosa will be at hand to relieve me!]

"MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

"Perhaps she apprehends an interruption from her husband, and means that I should fasten the door. [*Going to the Door.*

"LAURA,

" LAURA, (*Stopping him.*)

" That is not at all necessary: you may—you may venture
" to declare your sentiments to me freely.

" MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

" This is taking effectual care that I shan't misinterpret
" her, indeed! I shall never be able to contain myself!"

ROSA, (*Peeping.*)

I hear no screaming yet: I fancy Laura has no reason to complain of the violence of the old gentleman's passions. [*Retires.*

LAURA.

You are still silent, Signor Aldobrand! [*Aside—What the deuce can be the matter with the man?*—[MONTANO *kisses her Hand.*—Hold, Sir! this freedom is too much! Can this be the wife, prudent, and discreet Aldobrand?

MONTANO, (*Throwing open his Friar's Habit.*)

No, Madam! 'tis the fond, the faithful Ibrahim!

LAURA.

Ah! I am betray'd; and am fallen a victim to my own imprudence! [*Breaks from him, and exit. At the Moment ROSA enters on the opposite Side, MONTANO wraps himself up in his Disguise.*

ROSA.

Your servant, good Signor Aldobrand! I have caught you at last. " Possibly you have assum'd this disguise in order to give
" Laura some intelligence of Ibrahim?

" MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

" He little thinks that he is so near the truth.

" ROSA.

" Or very likely you have resolved to make love in masquerade, as it might not be quite convenient to appear in your
" own person?

" MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

" Right again! The man has an admirable knack at guessing!

" ROSA.

" You see I am not ignorant of the person whom that disguise conceals, nor of the purpose for which it was assum'd.

" MONTANO,

“ MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

“ I’faith, I rather perceive you are ignorant of it, by your
“ bullying in so high a stile.”

ROSA.

I find the Algerine is not yet taken : that rogue who was to
be hang’d, drown’d, flay’d, and carbonaded ! You have let him
escape, after all your promises to imprison him in spite of law
or equity.

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

A pretty hair’s-breadth escape I have had !

ROSA.

But you have been bribed : I doubt not that you are interested
in his being at liberty ?

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

Rather so, indeed !

ROSA.

And I am to be assassinated by him ! I dare say, I am be-
trayed ! and that, at this moment, he knows that you issued the
order for apprehending him at my request ?

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

Not till this moment did he know it, good Signor Lucilio !

ROSA.

Not that I fear the arm of the haughty Moor, could I but
meet him face to face. I only dread lest, lurking under some
disguise, he may attack me at a moment when I am not prepar’d ;
for I fancy my courage was never yet *brought in dispute*.

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

I dare believe not : there can be but one opinion of it !

ROSA.

But not even the abject silence which guilt imposes on your
tongue shall save you from my just revenge !—I have a very cu-
rious piece of steel here !

[*Drawing her Sword.*]

Enter FIRELOCK behind.

MONTANO.

And I believe I have just such another !

[*Draws, and discovers himself.*]

FIRELOCK.

FIRELOCK.

And here's a third, which I'll match with either of them!

ROSA.

Ibrahim!

FIRELOCK.

My friend, the Algerine captain, fighting in ambuscade!

MONTANO.

The same.—But perhaps, Signor Lucilio, this is one of your unprepar'd moments?

ROSA.

I—I—am not yet prepar'd for you, indeed, Sir!—You—you are safe.—[*Putting up her Sword.*—Aldobrand must be the first victim of my vengeance!

MONTANO.

Pitiful boy! draw instantly! Are these the evasions——

ROSA.

I am not to be frighten'd, Sir!—I—I shall not fight at present! True courage, Sir, like mine—always calm—always calm, I say—and intrepid, looks down, Sir, with contempt, on the impotent attacks of—of—of malice—and—and, in short, Sir—I—I shall find another time to see you! [*Exit.*]

FIRELOCK.

I am not sorry he has escap'd you: such a conquest would have disgraced your sword.

MONTANO.

And this is the being for whom Laura has quitted me! But I'll think no more of it!—Ere I quit Florence for ever, the villainy of this Aldobrand, in perverting the laws to his unworthy purposes, shall be punished. He is a traitor to his country, who tamely beholds her laws and liberties invaded, either by the assassin hand of knavery, or the bolder attacks of tyranny.

A I R.

Accurs'd the wretch, whose coward soul,
Aw'd by Oppression's guilty hand,
Dares not the lawless power controul,
Which drives fair Freedom from the land;
Who,

Who, deaf to Honour's call sublime,
 Tamely to tyranny submits,
 Becomes th' accomplice in the crime,
 And shares the treason he permits ! [Exit.

SCENE, ALDOBRAND'S House.

MONTANO'S *Algerine Habit and Turban lying on a Chair.*

Enter VIOLA.

VIOLA.

Alas, how suddenly have I been awaken'd from my dream of bliss ! How unexpected the reverse ! But a moment ago, I seem'd to be treading the paths of happiness, and whither have they led me ! Yet does not Hope desert me : I will caress the kind guest ; and, like a drowning wretch, still continue to clasp him while I seem to be irrecoverably sinking !

A I R.

Thus we view the treach'rous morning
 With false smiles the hills adorning ;
 Tho' of storms they give no warning,
 Yet no sooner seen than gone :
 Still, while clouds on clouds impelling,
 The storm drives on, with ruin swelling,
 Fancy, every cloud dispelling,
 Paints to-morrow's happy dawn.

Enter ALDOBRAND and ALICE.

ALDOBRAND.

Once more I bid you welcome home, my young Madam !—Why, you made but a short visit to your lover !—Egad ! he and I have been playing the English game of cricket with you : I bowl you at him, he bats you back again to me ; you come plump into my hands, so he is caught out, and there is an end of the game !—Go to your chamber, and study the charms of retirement.

[Exit VIOLA.

ALICE.

Well, Sir, I am quite impatient to hear your success with Laura ?

ALDOBRAND.

[*Aside*—Ah, the cockatrice !—But I'll dissemble.]—Don't mention her, Alice : I have had enough of gallantry ; the very name is poison to my ears—a pistol to my head—a dagger to my breast !—

I

Enter

Enter FABIO.

FABIO.

Signora Laura is below.

ALDOBRAND.

Indeed!—Why—why—there is great condescension in her visiting me.—I'll wait on her!

ALICE.

What, Sir! would you put the steel to your breast?

ALDOBRAND.

Ah, Alice! if it be steel, it is certainly touched with a loadstone; for I am irresistibly drawn to it, though I dread it's point.

[Exeunt ALDOBRAND and FABIO.]

ALICE.

Poor Viola! thus to be awakened in a fright from her dream of happiness!—But I'll assist her to fit the old dotard, yet!—

Enter MONTANO in the Friar's Habit.

Bless me, Signor Aldobrand! can I believe my eyes? Why, I parted with you but this moment, and now I see you in the very dress—

MONTANO, *(Discovering himself.)*

Which was intended as Aldobrand's passport to Laura!—I have done with it, my dear, and am come for my own cloaths! *[Throws aside the Friar's Dress, and puts on the Turban, &c.]*

ALICE.

Are not you the Algerine captain who behaved so kindly to the poor slaves?—I am sure you must be a good Christian in your heart!

[MONTANO retires while ALDOBRAND enters.]

ALDOBRAND.

Alice, give orders that my doors be instantly shut against that ruffian Ibrahim!—Here is poor Lucilio come to claim my protection: he and Laura are afraid to trust themselves in their own house.—That fellow is born to be the plague of my life; wherever I go, I am sure to meet him!

MONTANO, *(Coming forward.)*

I understand that you have issued an order to apprehend me, good Signor?

ALICE, *(Aside.)*

I hope the captain will give him a sound beating!—I'll go and keep the servants out of hearing. *[Exit.]*

MONTANO.

I mean to surrender myself to Justice, if necessary; but I fear, though you call yourself her representative, you do not speak the voice

voice of your constituent ; but are like a bad inn, which promises good accommodation on its sign, while there is nothing but extortion within !

ALDOBRAND.

How dare you thus affront a magistrate ?

MONTANO.

Miscreant ! do not rouse my anger ! or, by all your villainies, I swear——

ALDOBRAND.

Help ! help !

Enter ROSA.

MONTANO.

But I beg pardon ! your life is that gentleman's property ; he has sworn to dispatch *you* before he fights *me*.

ALDOBRAND.

I'll give up my turn, with all my soul !

ROSA.

Signor Aldobrand, pay no attention to the idle dreams of a madman.

MONTANO.

Well, if you will have them dreams, I dreamt that, under this disguise—[*Taking up the Friar's Dress.*]—I believe we are all three acquainted with it—under this disguise, I say, the seducing, gallant Aldobrand, meant to attempt the chastity of that gentleman's wife——

ROSA, (*Angrily.*)

How, Signor Aldobrand !

MONTANO.

And that the brave and noble Lucilio, conniving at the designs of this youthful ravisher, lay in wait for him, to take advantage of his cowardice.

ALDOBRAND.

How, Signor Lucilio !—And who the devil told you all this ?

MONTANO.

There is my author ; who, also, while I was disguis'd as a friar, informed me of your kind intention, not only to imprison, but to hang, drown, flay, and carbonade me !—I think those were your words, Signor Aldobrand ?—I make no ceremony, gentlemen, in acquainting you with each other's rascality ! I am persuaded you are both too much of the poltroon, for me to apprehend any bloodshed between you.

ALDOBRAND.

Very pretty, upon my soul !—They seem to be excellent company, so I'll e'en leave them together.

[*Exit.*

ROSA.

ROSA.

Yes, yes, I shall remember this!—But I must keep down my passion.

A I R.

Good Sir, in vain you bend your brow,
And look so queer, I know not how,
And set your arms a-kimbo:
My laughter you provoke;
Ha! ha! ha! ha!
So pleasant is the joke.

If, Sir, I chose to try my skill,
Of fencing soon you'd have your fill;
But, mighty Signor Whiskers,
With you I won't engage:
Ha! ha! ha! ha!
A fig for all your rage!

Nay, pr'ythee, friend, don't draw your sword;
I shan't draw mine, upon my word!
Nor could I fight for laughing,
Were I to look at you:
Ha! ha! ha! ha!
And so, sweet Sir, adieu!

MONTANO *going, meets* OCTAVIO.

OCTAVIO.

My friend, my Montano! how happy your presence makes me!—Then my Viola is safe!—My visit here, at this time, will prevent Aldobrand's suspecting the scheme by which he is depriv'd of his prey—

MONTANO, (*Aside.*)

He must mean my personating Aldobrand at Laura's! How could it have reach'd his ears?

OCTAVIO.

Tell me, Montano, how did she look? what did she say? Relate every circumstance?

MONTANO.

Why, when I first entered the house, she took me for Aldobrand.

OCTAVIO.

Took you for Aldobrand!—Ha! ha! ha! A ridiculous mistake! and no great compliment to you, neither!—Well, did she not often call upon Octavio?

MONTANO.

MONTANO.

No, she never mention'd your name.

OCTAVIO.

That's strange !

MONTANO.

Her tongue faltering with conscious guilt——

OCTAVIO.

Conscious guilt ! What a strange phrase for the amiable timidity of the sex !—But proceed.

MONTANO.

Just as I caught her in my arms——

OCTAVIO.

What !

MONTANO.

Her husband rush'd into the room, and surpriz'd us.

OCTAVIO.

Her husband !—What husband ?—I talk to you of my Viola; the lovely charge whom I entrusted to you not two hours ago.

MONTANO.

Viola entrusted to me !—Why, my dear friend, either you or I must have lost our wits, for I don't recollect that I ever saw the lady in my life.

OCTAVIO.

I am in torment !—Oh, Viola!

Enter REGNALTO, hastily.

REGNALTO.

She is now in the house : Alice, by your own orders, gave her into the hands of Aldobrand; who, by some unaccountable accident, was dress'd like Ibrahim.

MONTANO.

Rather whimsical in you to mistake Aldobrand for me ; and no great compliment to me neither, as you say ! [*To* OCTAVIO.

REGNALTO.

It is not too late to retrieve every thing.—Signor Ibrahim, you must not be seen here : wait near the garden-gate ; your friend Octavio will need your services.

MONTANO.

Well, Octavio, take care you make no more mistakes. [*Exit.*

REGNALTO.

But we are interrupted : dissemble your chagrin at what is pass'd, and fear nothing.

Enter

THE STRANGERS AT HOME.

Enter ALDOBRAND and FABIO.

OCTAVIO.

Signor Aldobrand, my errand will apologize for this unseasonable visit.

ALDOBRAND.

Rather unseasonable, to be sure; and especially as Viola——

OCTAVIO.

Sir, I speak to you of Regnalto—I hear he is released from slavery.

ALDOBRAND,

Released from slavery!—Ha!

OCTAVIO.

Why, you seem surpriz'd: you——

ALDOBRAND.

My joy overcomes me!—that's all.

OCTAVIO.

He is soon to make his appearance in Florence,

ALDOBRAND.

I should be heartily glad to see him——[*Aside*—At the devil!] But, pray, how did you hear this news?

OCTAVIO.

My lacquey had it this moment from Regnalto's servant, Laurence, who is his old acquaintance.

ALDOBRAND.

[*Aside*—I'm in a cold chill!] Regnalto's servant in Florence!

OCTAVIO.

In your house at this moment!

ALDOBRAND.

In my house!—Run, Fabio, and bring him hither immediately!—My old friend's servant to be under my roof, and I not know it!

[*Exit FABIO,*

OCTAVIO.

It rather seems as if he meant to conceal himself from you.

ALDOBRAND.

Egad! that's very true, as you say!—Perhaps the dog may have robb'd his master; and, when he finds himself discover'd, he may make off. I had better go and see after him myself. There are so many rogues in the world!

[*Exit.*

OCTAVIO, (*To REGNALTO.*)

Tell me what means——

REGNALTO,

REGNALTO.

Ask me no questions! They believe me dumb; still let them think so.

OCTAVIO.

• The charming Viola——

REGNALTO.

Accepts the offer which your letter convey'd to her. I will assist in her elopement; and have a ladder of ropes ready placed at the balcony in the garden.

OCTAVIO.

Transport!—And this news of Regnalto——

REGNALTO.

Is true!—But here comes Aldobrand.

OCTAVIO.

Then we must not be seen together.—The garden, at twelve!

REGNALTO.

Depend on me.

[Exit.

Enter ALDOBRAND.

ALDOBRAND.

Aye, there's that dog Laurence, sure enough!—But there's no fear of his running away; he is so tipsy, he can hardly stand.

OCTAVIO.

You must feel a singular satisfaction at the approaching return of your old friend Regnalto?

ALDOBRAND.

A very singular satisfaction, indeed!—I never felt any thing like it before!

Enter LAURENCE drunk, and FABIO.

OCTAVIO.

Is that Regnalto's servant?

ALDOBRAND.

He himself, Sir.

LAURENCE.

There you are mistaken; for I am not myself at present.

OCTAVIO.

And your master——

LAURENCE.

Like man, like master; he is not himself, neither. But we shall come to ourselves, both of us, before to-morrow morning!

ALDOBRAND.

Where is your master? [*Aside*—I sit on pins and needles!]

LAURENCE.

LAURENCE.

My master is at home.

ALDOBRAND.

At home!

LAURENCE.

And yet he is not at home—because the people make a stranger of him.

ALDOBRAND.

Is he in Florence?

LAURENCE.

How can I tell? I hardly know where I am myself: and if I did, I would not tell you; for, to speak the truth, I have my suspicions of you, my old boy!

ALDOBRAND.

Old boy!—Familiar rogue!

LAURENCE.

Familiar! I am sure you and I have been very distant for these nine years past.

ALDOBRAND.

A blessed state you are in, firrah!

LAURENCE.

Yes, I am married; and that is a blessed state you'll never be in.—Do you think, now, that Signora Viola will ever marry such an ugly, decrepit, old——

ALDOBRAND.

Why, you abusive rascal!—Out of my sight!

LAURENCE.

Signor Octavio, she is a fine girl, and walks in the garden sometimes!—Love lights her; she does not want the light of the moon.

ALDOBRAND.

Eh! what?

OCTAVIO, (*Aside.*)

That fellow's tongue will discover all!

“ALDOBRAND.

“What's that you said about the moon?

“LAURENCE.

“That if you were married, you would be very much like the moon.

“ALDOBRAND.

“How!”

“LAURENCE.

“LAURENCE.

“Why, in the course of a month, you would certainly
“have horns!” [Exit.

ALDOBRAND.

Signor Octavio, you'll pardon my reminding you that it is
very late?

OCTAVIO.

I understand you, Signor: and, as it is near my hour, I'll take
my leave.

ALDOBRAND.

Good night, sweet Signor!—[Exit OCTAVIO.]—Fabio, I
don't know whether I am upon my head or my heels! This Reg-
naldo is certainly in Florence: and then, I don't like what that
drunken fellow said to Octavio about Viola's walking in the gar-
den; I fear there is some mischief stirring. Tell Giuseppe and
Roberto to get their carbines, and we'll take a walk round the
garden; Signor Lucilio, too, shall join our company—I am al-
ways most valiant when I am best supported! [Exeunt.

SCENE, the Garden.

A Ladder of Ropes fix'd to the Balcony.

Enter MONTANO.

MONTANO.

This, I think, is the spot where Octavio appointed me to
stand guard.—Alas! if my endeavours for my friend's happiness
are crown'd with no better success than those for my own—
But I hear voices! [Retreating to the Back of the Scene.

Enter LAURA and ROSA.

ROSA.

I wish we could see some one appear at the window, that we
might apprize Viola of her danger.

LAURA.

Happy Viola! to love, and be beloved! while I have lavish'd
my affection on an ingrate; who, perhaps, at this very moment
amuses a happy mistress with the fond tale of my weakness!

A I R.

Hope, on thee I call,
While thro' thy paths I stray;
Where'er my footsteps fall,
Oh! light me on my way.

K

Tho'

Tho' lost in Error's maze,
Still kindly soothe my woe ;
Nor let Truth's brighter blaze
Shew what I fear to know.

ROSA.

Think no more of your false lover, Madam. Take my advice ; and, from among the noble youths of Florence, who languish for your smiles, chuse one to whom I may resign you.

MONTANO, (*Afide.*)

Pretty advice from a husband !—'Sdeath ! I cannot suffer this disgrace of manhood to exist. [*Drawing his Sword.*]

LAURA.

Oh, my dear girl——

MONTANO, (*Afide.*)

How, a girl !

LAURA.

How continually has my tongue dwelt on it's dearest theme—the praises of my Montano !

MONTANO, (*Afide.*)

Montano !—Do I live !

LAURA.

But it is all over, Rosa !—I will retire from a world which has lost it's only charm for me ; a convent shall——

MONTANO.

This excess of joy is too much !

LAURA.

Hark !

ROSA.

It is the voice of Ibrahim !

MONTANO.

No, it is a voice with which the gentle Laura should be better acquainted ; a voice which, during four cruel years of slavery, has never ceased to invoke Heaven for her happiness !

LAURA.

Oh, Rosa ! it is—it is my Montano ! [*Faints in his Arms.*]

ROSA.

And so ends my first chapter of matrimony !—A very excellent mode of getting rid of a wife, without the trouble of a divorce, or the expence of a separate maintenance !—How many poor husbands would envy me !—But, my dear Madam—and, Sir—you forget that this is a moment as critical to Viola as to yourselves ; and I hear footsteps in the garden.

MONTANO.

MONTANO.

Let us retire then, my love. From this arbour I can watch whether any one approaches the balcony.

Enter LAURENCE, still drunk, with a Bottle in his Hand.

LAURENCE.

'Tis rather a dark night ; or else I don't see clear !

A I R.

Tho' I can't walk quite straight,
And in figures of eight
Still circling my legs do their duty,
You'll always observe,
That a regular curve
Is reckon'd the true line of beauty:
Of Orpheus they tell,
(He who fiddled so well)
That his notes made hills, rocks, and trees, caper ;
So I can, in my way,
When a solo I play,
Make them dance full as well as that scraper.

Tho' at first, on a survey,
Things seem topsy-turvey,
When you're us'd to't, they don't look so frightful ;
Still they move more or less,
And good judges confess
Moving prospects are always delightful:
The world's circular motion,
I'm sure's no false notion ;
For, tho' sober I ne'er could believe it,
Truth in wine, boys, is found,
Now I see it turns round,
He that's drunk can most plainly perceive it.

I wonder where my master is ! As for old Aldobrand, I suppose he is in bed and asleep—

Enter ALDOBRAND and FABIO at the Back of the Stage ; they approach LAURENCE softly.

But I can't think what's become of my good friend Dummy, as they call him !—Ah, Sir, are you there ? I have been looking for you all over the garden.—What ! not come to your speech yet ?—I'faith, I think you have infected me ; for I have not my speech half so well as I had a little while ago.—Where is

K 2

Signor

Signor Octavio?—You don't stand still! What makes you stagger so?—Why don't you answer me, Sir? Old Aldobrand can't hear us now.

[ALDOBRAND *seizes him on one Side, FABIO on the other.*

ALDOBRAND.

But he can hear, you hang-dog!—So Dummy can speak, can he?

LAURENCE.

Ah, Signor Aldobrand, is it you?—Upon my soul, I did not know you!

ALDOBRAND.

I'll make you know me, you dog, before I have done with you!

FABIO.

Hush, I hear somebody!—Come this way, Sir! [*Retiring behind.*] To LAURENCE—Sit you down there.

LAURENCE.

I will—and take a nap!

Enter REGNALTO and FIRELOCK.

VIOLA and ALICE appear at the Window.

ALICE.

Signor Octavio, where are you?

VIOLA.

I am frighten'd to death! Signor Octavio——

FIRELOCK, (*Aside.*)

Bless their sweet tongues! There is more music in a pretty woman's voice than in all the orchestras in Italy!

VIOLA.

Say who you are?

REGNALTO.

The friend of Octavio; in a word, the dumb slave. The ladder of ropes is render'd useless, for I've secur'd the key of the door. But somebody approaches!—Descend, and I'll be ready to receive you.

[*VIOLA and ALICE retire.*

Enter OCTAVIO.

OCTAVIO.

Well met, my trusty friends! True, I see, to your appointment.

REGNALTO.

Suppose, in case of a discovery, I were to personate Regnalto: his cloaths fit me exactly; and I might by that means further your designs.

OCTAVIO.

Not at the expence of my honour; I will not owe my success to artifice.

REGNALTO.

REGNALTO.

Psha! a little artifice is often very useful: 'tis only retreating from an enemy when he is too powerful for us; and a good pair of heels is sometimes very serviceable—Eh! friend Firelock?

FIRELOCK.

A good pair of heels may be as useful to a coward as artifice is to a knave: but honesty as much despises the aid of the one, as courage disdains the assistance of the other!

REGNALTO.

Viola approaches.

Enter VIOLA and ALICE, from a Door under the Balcony.

OCTAVIO.

My Viola!

VIOLA.

What a transition from despair to happiness!—Octavio, I commit myself to your honour.

OCTAVIO.

Charming Viola! my affection shall prove that your confidence is not misplaced.

ALDOBRAND and FABIO come forward.

ALDOBRAND.

Lights there!—Guisepe!—Roberto!—where are you?

Enter SERVANTS with Lights.

Your servant, Signor Octavio!—[*VIOLA shrieks, and swoons in REGNALTO's Arms.*]
—This scheme is no better than the other: and you have not got your Algerine friend to back you now.

MONTANO comes forward, with LAURA and ROSA.

MONTANO.

Here I am, Signor Aldobrand, at your service!

ROSA.

And here am I! You are among friends, you see.

ALDOBRAND.

Why then, as I am among friends, I shall make free!

[*Attempting to seize VIOLA.*]

FIRELOCK.

Stand off, if you regard your life!

[*Draws.*]

ALDOBRAND.

Thank you for the hint: I'll take your advice!—[*Retreating.*]
But as for you, my lads, [*To the SERVANTS.*] fall on!—Seize the lady!

REGNALTO.

REGNALTO.

Not while I have an arm to defend her!

ALDOBRAND.

Well said, Dummy!—Kill him, my boys, in the first place!

OCTAVIO.

First you have to conquer me, slaves!

[*Throwing himself before* REGNALTO.

ALDOBRAND.

Why, Signor Octavio! are you mad?—What right has that fellow to Viola?—Am not I her guardian?

REGNALTO, (*Throwing off his Slave's Dress.*)

And am not I her brother!

FABIO, (*To* ALDOBRAND.)

It is a pity you sent for the lights, Sir!

REGNALTO, (*To the SERVANTS.*)

Sheathe your swords; I am master here!—Your term is expired, Signor Aldobrand.

ALDOBRAND.

Yes, and I am turn'd out at a moment's warning, I see!

VIOLA.

Do I at length embrace my brother!—Kind Heaven, I have no more to ask!

REGNALTO.

Except a husband, Viola! and him I give to you without asking—[*Giving her Hand to* OCTAVIO.]—A husband to whom your brother owes his liberty and life!

LAURENCE, (*Coming forward.*)

Hey-day! my old boy, why you are mistaken again!—You have made a cursed number of blunders this evening!—Rot me, if I believe you are quite sober!

REGNALTO.

And now, my generous friend Ibrahim!—

MONTANO.

No longer Ibrahim, but Montano!—Fortune, who made us companions in adversity, has compensated for all by giving you to me as a companion in happier days.

LAURA.

Signor Montano, I hope you will not forget my first husband!

[*Pointing to* ROSA.

ROSA.

Believe me, I shall not forget your second as long as I live! I am sure I found it so hard a task to personate the husband—

LAURENCE.

A COMIC OPERA.

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LAURENCE.

That, I suppose, the next time you get married, you'll personate the wife!—Depend upon it, you'll act the part much more naturally.

ALICE.

If she wants a good example, let her copy me, Laurence!

OCTAVIO, (*To FIRELOCK.*)

As for you, my noble soldier!—

FIRELOCK.

As for me, Signor, I have to thank you for two favours: first, for restoring to me the greatest of blessings—my liberty! and, secondly—for affording me the opportunity of shewing my gratitude!

REGNALTO, (*To ALDOBRAND.*)

Wretch! what have you to say in defence of yourself?

ALDOBRAND.

Nothing, good Signor Regnalto!—Least said is soonest mended.

REGNALTO.

Repent, then, of your villainy, in silence: let us only hear the voice of joy!—We have now the highest blessing mortals can possess—that of sharing the happiness we create!

F I N A L E.

REGNALTO.

Away with all care, till to-morrow,
No longer we're destin'd to roam;
To-day bid adieu to all sorrow,
And welcome THE STRANGERS AT HOME.

CHORUS.

Away with all care, &c.

DUETT. LAURA and MONTANO.

No more of Fortune we'll complain,
Since she so kind has prov'd at last;
Our joys, contrasted with our pain,
Shall brighter shine for sorrows past.

LAURENCE.

On the subject now before us,
I would fain my zeal display—

ALDOBRAND.

30 THE STRANGERS AT HOME.

ALDOBRAND.

And I, too, would join the Chorus,
If I knew but what to say.

VIOLA.

My freedom I gladly resign,
Nor shall I for liberty ever repine.

OCTAVIO.

And I from my purpose will never depart,
To bind faster those bonds in which Love holds your heart.

FIRELOCK.

Tho' I've no objection to fighting,
I' faith it is better by half,
With such happy lovers uniting,
To join in the song and the laugh!

ALICE.

Believe me, I joy to behold you
All going to be married so soon—
You know, Ma'am, I often have told you,
A good husband is Fortune's best boon.

ROSA.

When I marry, altho' I won't barter
My own little person for pelf,
In wedlock I'll keep up the charter,
And still wear the breeches myself.

CHORUS.

Away with all care, till to-morrow,
No longer we're destin'd to roam;
O chace from our bosoms all sorrow, [*To the Audience.*]
And welcome THE STRANGERS AT HOME!

